

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE PATRICK KENNEDY
TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON, DC
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2012

Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, members of the Committee.

I'd like to open by reading a quotation to you: "Libyans face significant challenges as they make the transition from an oppressive dictatorship to a stable and prosperous democracy," but, "it is clearly in the U.S. interest," and "it will be an extraordinary honor to represent the United States during this historic period of transition in Libya."

Those were Ambassador Chris Stevens' words at his Senate confirmation hearing this past Spring. They help us understand why he went to Libya, why he viewed his efforts there as important, and why it is imperative that we continue his work. Chris Stevens believed that no challenge was too big or too hard if our national security interests and our values were at stake. And that is what's at stake in Libya.

Continuing the spirit of cooperation the Department has shown Congress since the attack on our post in Benghazi, we are here today to answer your questions and participate in a constructive discussion about how we can mitigate the risk of this tragedy ever happening again. We are here at your request -- and before we ourselves know all the answers or have the benefit of any reviews. You will hear from me and two of my Diplomatic Security colleagues, Eric Nordstrom and Charlene Lamb

As Secretary Clinton has said, the American people -- and America's diplomats in particular -- deserve a full and accurate accounting of the events that resulted in the death of four Americans.

I have been a foreign service officer for nearly forty years. I have served every President from Nixon to Obama. No one is more determined to get this right than the President, the Secretary and the men and women of the State Department. And nobody will hold us more accountable than we hold ourselves. The men we lost were our friends and colleagues, a cross section of the men and women who put their lives on the line every day in the inherently dangerous work of diplomatic service to our nation.

The Secretary has already appointed an Accountability Review Board led by Ambassador Thomas Pickering, a retired career Foreign Service Officer with an impeccable record. His board also includes former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, as well as Hugh Turner, Richard Shinnick, and Catherine Bertini, all of whom are distinguished public servants with long experience in diplomacy, intelligence, development and management.

Last week, the board began its work to determine whether our security systems and procedures were appropriate in light of the threat environment, whether those systems and procedures were properly implemented, and any lessons that may be relevant to our work around the world. The Secretary has asked the Board to work as quickly and transparently as possible, without sacrificing diligence and accuracy.

This is a complicated investigation that will necessarily take time to complete. As this work continues, we will learn more about what actually happened, and we will be able to better assess the facts and information we have. In addition, of course, there is an open criminal investigation being conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Until these investigations conclude, we are dealing with an incomplete picture. And, as a result, our answers today will also be incomplete.

No one in the Administration has claimed to know all the answers. We have always made clear that we are giving the best information we have at the time. And that information has evolved. For example, if any administration official, including any career official, were on television on Sunday, September 16th, they would have said what Ambassador Rice said. The information she had at that point from the intelligence community is the same that I had at that point. As time went on, additional information became available. Clearly, we know more today than we did on the Sunday after the attack. But as the process moves forward and more information becomes available, we will be sure to continue consulting with you.

I would like to take a moment to address a broader question that may be on your minds: Why is it necessary for representatives of the United States to be in Benghazi despite the very real dangers there? This question cuts to the core of what we do at the State Department and to the role of America in the world.

Ambassador Stevens first arrived in Benghazi during the height of the revolution, disembarking from a chartered boat, when the city was the heart of the opposition to Colonel Qadhafi and the rebels there were fighting for their lives. There was no doubt that it was dangerous. A bomb exploded in the parking lot of his hotel. The transitional authorities struggled to provide basic security. Extremists sought to exploit any opening to advance their own agenda. Yet Ambassador Stevens understood that the State Department must operate in many places where the U.S. military cannot or does not, where there are no other boots on the ground, where there are serious threats to our security. And he understood that the new Libya was being born in Benghazi and that it was critical that the United States have an active presence there.

That is why Ambassador Stevens stayed in Benghazi during those difficult days. And it's why he kept returning as the Libyan people began their difficult transition to democracy. He knew his mission was vital to U.S. interests and values, and was an investment that would pay off in a strong partnership with a free Libya.

In the days after the attack on our facility in Benghazi on September 11th, the people of that city showed how right he was. Thousands marched in the streets mourning their fallen friend. Signs read, "Chris Stevens Was a Friend to All Libyans." The people of Benghazi overran extremist bases. Civilians insisted that militia disarm and support the new democracy. They confirmed what Chris Stevens knew so well: The United States is better off because Chris Stevens went to Benghazi.

It is right and appropriate to review the security procedures in place and to work to improve them for the future. We too ask ourselves if we provided our people in the field with everything they needed to do their jobs. We are already asking ourselves every question to better understand what happened, and how, if we can, we reduce the risk of it happening again.

But one thing is not up for debate today or any other day: The men and women who risk their lives in the service of our country are heroes. It is up to each of us to support them, not second-guess them – particularly those who carry the burden of trying to provide security in a dangerous environment.

Diplomacy, by its very nature, often must be practiced in dangerous places. We send people to more than 275 diplomatic posts in 170 countries around the world. No other part of our government is asked to stretch so far or reach so deep. We do this because we have learned again and again that when America is absent – especially from the dangerous places – there are consequences: extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our national security is threatened. As the Secretary says, leadership means showing up. So that’s what we do. And that’s how we protect this country and sustain its global leadership.

Now we can, and we will, reduce the risk to the brave men and women who serve – but we cannot eliminate it. Our facilities must be protected, but not all are fortresses.

I want to be clear: The Department of State regularly assesses risk and allocation of resources for security; a process which involves the considered judgments of experienced professionals on the ground and in Washington, using the best information available. The assault that occurred on the evening of September 11, however, was an unprecedented attack by dozens of heavily armed men.

We must continue deploying our diplomats and development professionals to dangerous places like Benghazi. There is no other alternative. As the Secretary said, “We will not retreat. We will keep leading, and we will stay engaged everywhere in the world, including in those hard places where America’s interests and security are at stake. That is the best way to honor those whom we have lost.”

All of us at the State Department will honor Glen Doherty, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Chris Stevens by continuing their work with the same purpose and resolve that they demonstrated every day. Our hearts and prayers go out to their family and their friends.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity. The Congress is an important partner in providing resources for our diplomatic security, so I look forward to working with you to continue providing America’s diplomats with the support they need to carry on their important work on behalf of the United States all over the world.

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DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
CHARLENE LAMB
TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON, DC
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2012

Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Charlene Lamb. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the Department of State, I'm responsible for the safety and security of more than 275 diplomatic facilities.

I've been in law enforcement for 35 years, starting as a uniformed police officer in Orange, California. Twenty-five of those years have been with the State Department, including 17 consecutive years stationed abroad as a Regional Security Officer in Nicaragua, Tanzania, Kuwait, Guatemala, and Germany.

I'm here today to share our best information to date about what happened in Benghazi on September 11th, and to have a constructive discussion with the committee about how we can best work together to prevent such tragedies in the future.

As you know, there is an on-going investigation being conducted by the FBI and we are speaking today with an incomplete picture. As a result, our answers today will also be incomplete. But as this process moves forward and more information becomes available, we will continue to engage closely with Congress.

State Department staff first moved into the facility in Benghazi in mid-2011. Let me begin by describing the actual compound. It is more than 300 yards long and nearly 100 yards wide.

The main building was divided into two sections. A public section included common areas and meeting space. The second section was a residential area that included the safe haven. A second building –Building B – housed Diplomatic Security agents. The Tactical Operations Center (or TOC) occupied a third building. It contained communications equipment, and a warning system. The fourth building on the compound, the one closest to the gate, served as the barracks for members of the Libyan 17th February Brigade who were on the compound round the clock.

After acquiring the compound, we made a number of security upgrades. To strengthen the compound's perimeter, we extended the height of the outer wall with masonry concrete. Then we added barbed wire and concertina razor wire to further extend the height of the wall to 12 feet. We increased the external lighting and erected Jersey Barriers –large concrete blocks – outside the perimeter to provide anti-ram protection. Inside each of the three steel gates, we installed steel drop bars to control vehicle traffic.

Inside the perimeter of the wall, we also added equipment to detect explosives, as well as an Imminent Danger Notification System. We hardened wooden doors with steel and reinforced locks. And we installed security grills on windows accessible from the ground. This included escape windows with emergency releases.

We also built guard booths and sandbag emplacements to create defensive positions inside the compound.

In terms of armed security personnel, there were five Diplomatic Security agents on the Compound on September 11th. There were also three members of the Libyan 17th February Brigade. In addition, stationed nearby by at the embassy annex was a well-trained U.S. quick reaction security team.

All of these measures and upgrades were taken in coordination with security officials in Benghazi, Tripoli, and Washington.

Let me underscore this point and provide some context. As I said, I work closely with 275 diplomatic facilities around the world. Determining the right level of security for each one is an intensive, ongoing, constantly evolving process -- one that I appreciate and understand from my own time on the ground as a Diplomatic Security officer.

We consult regularly with our people on the ground, with security professionals in Washington, and with the intelligence community. We use the most up-to-date information available.

Together with the Regional Security Officer, we develop a comprehensive security plan, which we constantly revise and update as situations change. It is important to understand this as we continue the conversation today.

That brings me to the events of September 11 itself. The account I am about to present is based on first-hand reports from several security personnel present that night. Additionally, I was in our Diplomatic Security Command Center monitoring multiple open lines with our agents for much of the attack.

The attack began at approximately 9:40 pm local time. Diplomatic Security agents inside the compound heard loud voices outside the walls, followed by gunfire and an explosion. Dozens of attackers then launched a full-scale assault that was unprecedented in its size and intensity. They forced their way through the pedestrian gate, and used diesel fuel to set fire to the Libyan 17th February Brigade members' barracks, and then proceeded towards the main building.

Let me add here that over the course of the attack, two local Libyan security personnel were beaten, and two were shot. We should not lose sight of their service.

When the attack began, a Diplomatic Security agent working in the Tactical Operations Center immediately activated the Imminent Danger Notification System and made an emergency announcement over the PA. Based on our security protocols, he also alerted the annex U.S. quick reaction security team stationed nearby, the Libyan 17th February Brigade, Embassy Tripoli, and the Diplomatic Security Command Center in Washington. From that point on, I could follow what was happening in almost real-time.

Gunfire was heard from multiple locations on the compound. One agent secured Ambassador Stevens and Sean Smith, the information management officer, in the safe haven. The other agents retrieved their M4 submachine guns and other tactical gear from Building B. When they attempted to return to the main building, they encountered armed attackers and doubled back to Building B.

The attackers used diesel fuel to set the main building ablaze. Thick smoke filled the entire structure. The Diplomatic Security agent began leading the Ambassador and Sean Smith through the debilitating smoke toward the emergency escape window.

The agent, nearing unconsciousness himself, opened the window and crawled out. He then realized they had become separated in the smoke. So he reentered the building and searched multiple times for the Ambassador and Mr. Smith. Finally the agent—suffering from severe smoke inhalation and barely able to breathe or speak – exited to the roof and notified the Tactical Operations Center of the situation.

At the same time, attackers swept across the compound towards the Tactical Operations Center and Building B. They broke into Building B, ravaging it, but did not reach the two agents inside. They attempted to break into the Tactical Operations Center again and again but were not able to breach the facility.

Determined to reach the main building, three agents regrouped, made their way to a near-by armored vehicle, and then drove over to assist the agent on the roof and to search for the Ambassador and Mr. Smith.

Despite thick smoke, the agents entered the building multiple times trying to locate the Ambassador and Mr. Smith. After numerous attempts, they found Sean Smith and, with the assistance of a member of the U.S. quick reaction security team, removed him from the building. Unfortunately, he was already deceased. They still could not find the Ambassador.

The annex U reaction security team arrived with approximately 40 members of the Libyan 17th February Brigade. They encountered heavy resistance as they approached the compound. Together with the Diplomatic Security agents, they helped secure the area around the main building and continued the search for the Ambassador—again making several trips into the building at their own peril.

At 11pm, members of the Libyan 17th February Brigade advised they could no longer hold the area around the main building and insisted on evacuating the site. The agents made a final search for the Ambassador before leaving in an armored vehicle.

They took heavy fire as they pulled away from the main building and on the street outside the compound. Two tires were blown out and the bullet-resistant glass shattered but remained intact. Upon arriving at the annex around midnight, they took up defensive positions, including on the roof. Shortly after their arrival, the annex itself began taking intermittent fire for a period of time.

In the early morning, an additional security team arrived from Tripoli and proceeded to the annex. Shortly after they arrived, the annex started taking mortar fire, with as many as three direct hits on the compound. It was during this mortar attack that Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty were killed and a Diplomatic Security agent and an annex quick reaction security team member were critically wounded.

A large number of Libyan government security officers subsequently arrived in more than 50 vehicles and escorted the remaining Americans to the airport.

While still at the airport, we were able to confirm reports that the Ambassador's body was at the Benghazi General Hospital. The Department coordinated the transfer of his remains to the

airport. All US government personnel, including those injured and killed in action, were then flown from Benghazi to Tripoli.

Before I close, I would like to echo what Under Secretary Kennedy said: The men and women who risk their lives in the service of our country are heroes. I know and served with many of our security professionals in Libya and around the world. They are my friends and colleagues. And I trust them with my life.

One of them is my colleague Eric Nordstrom, and he will speak about his time at Embassy Tripoli as the Regional Security Officer.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I look forward to answering your questions.

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Prepared Statement

Eric Allan Nordstrom, Regional Security Officer, Tripoli, Libya from September 21,
2011-July 26, 2012

At the request of Chairman Issa, and the Committee On Oversight & Government
Reform

Hearing on Security Failures in Benghazi, Tripoli on September 11, 2012

10 October 2012

Good morning Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, and other distinguished members of the committee. My name is Eric Nordstrom and I currently serve as a Supervisory Special Agent with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security. I joined the Department in April 1998 and have served in domestic and overseas postings including Washington, DC; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; New Delhi, India, and most recently as the Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, Libya; a position I held from September 21, 2011 until July 26, 2012. Prior to joining the Department of State, I began my career in federal law enforcement with the Department of Treasury as a Customs Inspector. As the Regional Security Officer, or "RSO," at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, I served as the principal security advisor to U.S. Ambassadors Gene Cretz and Chris Stevens on security and law enforcement matters.

I am here today to provide testimony in support of your inquiry into the tragic events of September 11, 2012, including the murders of Ambassador Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and Tyrone Woods. I had the pleasure of working with Ambassador Stevens during the final months of my tour in Libya and would echo what

many are saying: the loss of Ambassador Stevens is not only tragic for his family and sad for our country, but his death will prove to be a devastating loss to Libya, struggling to recover from its recent civil war. My family and I would like to offer personal condolences to the families of these four patriots who gave their lives in the service of their country.

My contribution to our nation's efforts in Libya will prove to be only a small part of the wider effort. There were many of us dedicated to the mission in Libya, both at home and abroad. To my colleagues who served with me and to those who are presently there in the aftermath of this attack, you have your country's sincere thanks and prayers. Even after the horrific attack, I remain cautiously optimistic about the future of Libya because of the preponderance of pro-American and pro-Western sentiment among the Libyan people, despite the tremendous challenges that country faces.

Let me say a word about the evening of September 11th. The ferocity and intensity of the attack was nothing that we had seen in Libya, or that I had seen in my time in the Diplomatic Security Service. Having an extra foot of wall, or an extra-half dozen guards or agents would not have enabled us to respond to that kind of assault. I'm concerned that this attack will signal a new security-reality, just as the 1984 Beirut attack did for the Marines; the 1998 East Africa bombings did for the State Department, and 9/11 for the whole country. It is critical that we balance the risk-mitigation with the needs of our diplomats to do their job, in dangerous and uncertain places. The answer cannot be to operate from a bunker.

When I arrived in Tripoli on September 21, 2011, with Ambassador Cretz, in the midst of the Libyan Civil War, we were greeted by members of the Zintan militia, with machine guns and antiaircraft weapons welded to their pickup trucks, and covered in homemade camouflage paint. It was immediately obvious to me that post-revolution Libya was a weakened state, exhausted from their civil war, operating under fragmented and paralyzed government institutions, barely able to protect itself from the ravages of roving gangs, Qaddafi loyalists, and militia groups. As a result, in Tripoli, the Libyan temporary government was not able to extend security assets in the customary way to our mission. We were therefore extremely limited in our ability to call upon the host nation for security, intelligence, and law enforcement contacts to identify emerging threats or to ask for assistance in mitigating those threats in Tripoli.

But, what they could provide and did provide was comprehensive security for our short term VIP visits. The issue was not the willingness or quality of some of the Libyan security, but that they could not sustain that level of security for more than a couple of days. In short, Libyans wanted to help, but they had very limited capabilities to do so. The Libyan Ministry of the Interior, and the international donor community, including the Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program identified this weakness, and during my time in Libya, several donors began providing training to address this shortcoming.

In Benghazi, the Government of Libya through the 17th February Brigade provided us consistent armed security since the very earliest days of the revolution. A

core unit of 17th February Brigade was housed at our compound. Based on our impression of the performance of this unit during the height of the revolution, our early meetings in Tripoli focused on getting the same or similar protection for our properties in Tripoli. Our confidence in 17th February Brigade was reaffirmed by their performance in response to a series of incidents at our facility in Benghazi.

The 17th February Brigade was not all that was tested in these incidents. While every security officer prefers to have more walls, more people, and more space between the facility and the potential threat, it was clear that the credibility and courage of the local guard force, the quality of our safe haven procedure where we sheltered in place, the effectiveness of our field expedient physical security improvements, and the communication with and response of the American Quick Reaction Force (QRF) worked to mitigate our existing threats. While I'd love to have had a large secured building and tons of security personnel in Benghazi, the fact is that the system we had in place was regularly tested and appeared to work as planned despite high turnover of DS agents on the ground.

This brings me to the issue of staff turnover. At traditional posts most staff are assigned for periods of one to three years. In re-establishing our presence in Libya after the revolution, we needed to rely on a high number of staff who could serve temporarily (what we call TDY), so that we could adjust staffing quickly in the event that the security situation drastically changed. In the short term, that can and did work very well. However, what I found is that having only TDY DS agents made re-establishing and

developing security procedures, policies and relationships more difficult. I understood it was also difficult for my colleagues in Washington to fill constant staffing requirements from a limited pool of available agents with high-threat tactical training. As the sole permanent RSO for the first seven months I was in Libya, I was unable to focus resources on developing traditional RSO programs as much as I would have wished, and instead spent a significant amount of time training new TDY staff, who were often set to leave eight weeks after they arrived. Nowhere was this more evident than in Benghazi, which had no permanent staff assigned to provide continuity, oversight and leadership to post's programs.

Given the limitations of using TDY personnel, and the requirement to be on the ground and engaged in Libya—both in Tripoli and in Benghazi—my immediate solution was to supplement security in Benghazi with personnel from Tripoli. We also hired locally employed drivers in Benghazi and provided them with counter-threat driver training in Tripoli so our Benghazi security personnel would not be required to act as drivers. In Tripoli, we trained and deployed a team of sixteen Libyan bodyguards thereby freeing up American security officers who could augment our security in Benghazi. Finally, once I had received two permanently assigned assistant RSOs, I was able to assign them responsibility for management of security programs which included providing continuity in Benghazi.

During my time in Tripoli, routine civil unrest, militia on militia violence, general lawlessness, and motor vehicle accidents were the primary threats facing our Mission. In

the Spring of 2012 we saw and noted an increasing number of attacks and incidents targeting foreign affiliated organizations. Grenade attacks on UN and UK vehicles, protestors storming TNC buildings in Benghazi and Tripoli to protest election issues, a crude IED attack on our compound in Benghazi in June, an RPG attack against the UK Ambassador's motorcade in Benghazi, and attacks against the ICRC in Misrata and Benghazi, and protests outside of the Russian, Chinese, Syrian and Nigerien Embassies in Tripoli, where protestors were able to gain access to the embassy grounds, where all cause for concern, and resulted in a regular review of our security procedures by post's Emergency Action Committee. As a result of these incidents, we deployed a mobile patrol designed to observe the routes and areas adjacent to our compounds, conducted emergency preparedness drills, reviewed and revised post's tripwires, updated and practiced internal defense procedures, and reiterated our requests at all levels of government for a consistent armed host nation security force. As a result of Ambassador Steven's meeting with senior Libyan Government officials, including the Minister of Interior, a 3-person armed police unit and marked vehicle was placed at our Tripoli residential compound during daytime hours.

In Benghazi, we deferred the arrival of the principal officer, curtailed staff movements in town, and engaged local officials on the progress of their investigations into the June attacks on our compound and the UK motorcade. In both Tripoli and Benghazi, we reviewed lock-down procedures with members of our local guard force, and in Benghazi, continued to train with the 17th February Brigade members stationed on our compound. I was also in regular contact with other diplomatic missions regarding

security, particularly the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the United Nations, to ensure that our security profile and posture was in sync with what other missions were doing. Finally, in early July, post requested continued TDY staffing of 15 U.S. security professionals, either DS field office or MSD agents or DOD/SST personnel, plus retention of a 6 agent MSD training team, for an additional 60 days, until mid-September 2012.

Much has been made about physical resource requests, and I'd like to address that issue. From the start, I was impressed with the plans that would send our team into Libya—a massive show of well-organized resources. I felt that resource requests would be considered seriously and fastidiously by DS and the Department. I believe that the vast majority of my requests were considered in that manner:

- \$170,00 worth of closed circuit televisions and a public address system was approved in a matter of days;
- More than half a million dollars of field expedient security upgrades including upgrades to the perimeter wall, vehicles gates and devices to control access to our compound in Tripoli, such as delta barriers and drop arms was supplied;
- More than \$100,000 of physical security upgrades were completed in Benghazi, including upgrades to the perimeter wall, vehicle gates, drop arms, vehicle barriers and guard booths was conducted;
- Upgraded perimeter light for our compounds in Tripoli and Benghazi was approved and deployed;

- Uniforms and equipment for our 125 member guard force and newly created local body guard team were supplied;
- 200 personal protective vests and helmets for our guards and U.S. staff in Tripoli and Benghazi was delivered; and,
- 25 armored vehicles were shipped to us during the course of the 10 months that I was at post.

Other upgrades requested such as grillwork for windows on our residential compound in Tripoli, upgraded entry doors for compound buildings, and residential protective window film to prevent injuries from flying glass would be included under a subsequent project to construct an interim Embassy compound. That project was scheduled to begin in August/September 2012.

Given the fluid nature of the political and security environment in Libya my preference was to maintain a stable number of security personnel. When I arrived in September, we had 37 State Department and Defense Department Personnel in Tripoli. In Benghazi, we had eight DS agents. As these security professionals were focused on crisis and stabilization work, I understood that because of the nature of their work, their time in Libya would have be limited, assuming we saw a general improvement in the security environment. After about four months, all of us at post agreed that the security situation in Libya had improved, at least temporarily, and we adjusted our security posture appropriately as did many other diplomatic missions operation in Libya. For example, many positive security tripwires we had set, were met: commercial air flights into Benghazi and Tripoli resumed; the country's banking and commercial sectors

stabilized; the amount and number of militia checkpoints reduced; senior Qaddafi regime officials were captured or killed; the civil war officially ended; significant oil production resumed; a cabinet had been formed; and children returned to school.

But, despite all of these improvements, for nearly 42 years, the Libyans had no experience in political consensus building or dispute resolution, and with the country awash in weapons, conflicts quickly escalated to gunfights. Additionally, it took the Libyan Government a very long time to integrate militias and former fighters into the new security structure, a process which they continue to struggle with to this day. There was no single, uniformed police force under Government control, and police needed support of the disparate militias in order to carry out their work. Therefore, it was difficult to get an effective police or security response to embassy requests.

Our long term security plan in Libya was to recruit and deploy an armed, locally hired Libyan bodyguard unit. However, because of Libyan political sensitivities, armed private security companies were not allowed to operate in Libya. Therefore, our existing, uniformed static local guard force, both in Tripoli and Benghazi were unarmed, similar to our static local guard forces at many posts around the world. Their job was to observe, report, and alert armed host nation security, and armed DS agents on-site. This left us with two primary options: continue the use of U.S. security personnel, or, create and deploy an armed, bodyguard unit consisting of local Libyan employees. The use of local nationals as armed security or armed bodyguards is a routine practice in the Department, often to comply with local firearms regulations in the host nation. Local nationals

provide us with continuity, local expertise, threat awareness, and language and cultural expertise. In my mind, the primary issue was maintaining U.S. security personnel in Libya (the SST and DS agents) for a sufficient amount of time to enable the full training and deployment, including mentorship, of the local bodyguard unit. Given the fragile security environment and the increasing size of the mission, post revised our initial bodyguard numbers upward from an initial number of 24 shortly after I departed post. It is my understanding that DS fully supported and funded this expansion.

The idea of private armed security in Libya was still a new and sensitive concept to the Libyan Government. Abuses of Qaddafi foreign mercenaries were still fresh in the minds of the Libya people. While the Government of Libya and specifically the Ministry of Interior were supportive of the idea of a direct-hire Libyan bodyguard unit for the mission, it would take them time to develop the necessary infrastructure to support our proposal, including a site for driver training and fire arms training for the bodyguards. The speed of that deployment was also contingent upon the issuance of firearms permits from the Government of Libya. Although more than a dozen bodyguards completed training by late April, we could only utilize them for duties that did not require them to be armed. This included acting as a liaison, or advance agent for a VIP visit or the Ambassador's travel. U.S. security personnel were issued firearms permits at the beginning of June, 2012, with our local bodyguards receiving permits about a month later. The delay was a result of the Ministry of Interior conducting additional vetting of the bodyguards, to ensure that they were not former Qaddafi loyalists.

As I departed Libya at the end of July, I understood that DS was in the process of identifying continued DS agent TDY support to maintain the staffing levels requested by post in early July. Specifically, post requested a minimum of 13 TDY security personnel for Tripoli to provide movement and static security support plus 2 TDY agents to act as Assistant RSOs until the RSO could grow to 5 full-time positions. Post requested DS continue to fill the December 2011 staffing level, and maintain at least a minimum of 3 TDY agents for Benghazi. It was my understanding and the understanding of my successor that TDY staffing levels in Tripoli would be reduced as our bodyguard unit expanded. When I departed on July 26, 2012, the mission had the following DS staffing: 3 permanent RSOs, 4 TDY Hight Trained field office DS agents, 4 MSD DS Agents focused on bodyguard training, 16 local Libyan bodyguards, and 3 TDY DS agents in Benghazi. The 16 member SST was scheduled for a phased departure by mid-August. Finally, there was on-going planning to retain 6 of the 16 SST members in Libya to engage in more traditional bilateral Department of Defense training activities with the Libyan Ministry of Defense.

I'm confident that the committee will conclude that Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, and Mission Libya officers conducted themselves professionally and with careful attention to managing people and budgets in a way that reflects the gravity of their task. I'm proud of the work that our team accomplished in Libya under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. The protection of our nation's diplomats, our embassies and consulates, and the work produced there is deserving of the time and treasure invested. The work of our fellow Americans abroad is essential to

advance the goals of our nation. I am glad to further discuss my experience, and hope that it proves beneficial for this committee, the State Department, and my fellow DS agents protecting and advancing U.S. interests abroad.

May God bless our nation and our efforts to bring peace to a contentious world.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I stand ready to answer any questions you might have.

I am Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wood. I am a member of the Utah National Guard with 24 years of service as a Special Forces soldier. I was mobilized for the 2002 Winter Olympics, Afghanistan from September of 2003 to May of 2004, and for counter terrorism work in the Southern Philippines from August of 2007 to May of 2008. I currently work for the US Bureau of Reclamation as the Upper Colorado Regional Security Officer or RSO. I am responsible to Reclamation for the security program that oversees 58 high and significant hazard dams in 5 western States, one of which is Glen Canyon Dam, a national critical infrastructure facility.

Upon hearing of the death of Ambassador Stevens and later of the Congressional inquiry, I identified myself to my Congressional Representative's staff as a person with intimate knowledge of the security situation prior to the attack. I was subsequently contacted and began a dialogue with staff investigators.

I made a personal decision to come forward with information and do not represent DoD or any government agency. I had unique access and placement to many government leaders and agencies working in Libya. I feel duty bound to come forward in order to inform and provide a portion of ground truth information. I feel a sense of honor for those individuals who have died in the service of their country. I realize much of my work in Libya was entangled in sensitive government work and I must be careful not to betray the trust and confidences that have been placed in me. The killing of a US Ambassador is a rare and extraordinary thing and requires our attention as a people. As a citizen I made the determination that this outweighs all other interests and will risk whatever circumstances may result from my testimony.

I served as the Site Security Team (SST) Commander in Libya from 12 February to 14 August of this year, 2012. I was mobilized from the Utah National Guard into Title 10 status and reported to Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA) which serves directly under AFRICOM. I was detailed in Title 22 status to the Department of State and assumed command of the SST.

The SST element consisted of 16 members. It is my understanding that it was crafted by the National Security Council to meet the demanding security challenges facing the Department of State and their requirement to re-establish diplomatic relations with a post Qaddafi or Free Libya. The SST loaned considerable support to the Department of State's security posture in this uncertain and volatile environment.

The SST's mission was to support and answer to Chief of Mission in Libya. I worked directly for the Regional Security Officer. We provided Security Support, Medical Support, Communications Support for every facet of security that concerned the Embassy.

As the SST Commander I had a seat on the County Team and I was closely involved with the operational planning and support to the RSO's security objectives. The Embassy staff lived and worked together at two locations in Tripoli and Embassy property in Benghazi. The SST supported security for movements of diplomatic officers

in and around Tripoli and other parts of Libya as their work required. On two occasions I sent SST members to Benghazi to support and bolster security at that location. The SST was closely integrated with regular diplomatic security agents working directly for the RSO as well as the Mobile Security Deployment teams.

I traveled to Benghazi on two occasions, once with the RSO to evaluate the security situation there and once to conduct some work for the Defense Attache's office. I was there the second time in June when the UK Ambassador's convoy was attacked. I responded with DS security agents in order to help provide medical and security assistance for wounded UK security personnel. I conducted a post attack investigation of the ambush or assault.

I met regularly with and held frequent conversations with Ambassador Cretz and Stevens and other members of the country team. In June when Eric Nordstrom rotated out, I was the senior member of the Country team with the exception of Ambassador Stevens. We lived and worked closely together in an atmosphere that is common to an expeditionary post. Ambassador Stevens was an avid runner and played tennis as well. The SST was heavily involved in performing his personnel security detail when he ran. I ran with him on several occasions.

The SST provided an important link for the country team to SOCAFRICA with its intelligence assets and resources. There was a good exchange of intelligence information between SOCAFRICA and the RSO. There was a great working relationship between SST and Diplomatic security agents and MSD members at the Embassy posts throughout Libya.

I reported 3 times a week thru video teleconference to SOCAFRICA and sent daily Situation reports. I had the communications capability to provide a direct link to SOCAFRICA 24-7. I no longer have access to email and documents that I worked with on a daily basis much of this was contained on AFRICOM servers and computers that I worked thru. My recollection of dates is mostly from memory and I will need to re-access that information in order to specify dates with certainty.

State Department's decision not to extend SST's security work beyond August 5th terminated our work in this capacity. The military members of my team were in the process of changing status from Title 22 back to Title 10 shortly before my departure.

The situation on the ground was continuously updated in reports that I sent to my military chain and CC'ed the RSO on. The RSO sent information on security and threats in a similar manner.

While the sound of gunfire in and around Tripoli subsided from February to April the situation remained unstable. Libyans struggled with a Transitional government that hesitated to make decisions and was forced to rely upon local or tribal militias with varying degrees to loyalty. In late spring, Police were allowed to return to work to help with traffic but were limited to that. Fighting between militias was still common when I

departed. Some militias appeared to be degenerating into organizations resembling free lance criminal operations. Targeted attacks against westerners were on the increase. In June the Ambassador received a threat on Facebook with a public announcement that he liked to run around the Embassy compound in Tripoli.

When I arrived in February there were 3 MSD teams on the ground. Ambassador Cretz was confronted with having to lose one of these and requested an equal number of regular diplomatic security agents. Ambassador also struggled with renewing the SST beyond April 5th. The second MSD team was withdrawn shortly after his departure, and the last MSD team was restricted from performing security work and limited to only training local guard force members in July. The remaining MSD was withdrawn at about the same time the SST security work was terminated. The RSO's struggled to maintain these losses with regular diplomatic security personnel.

The security in Benghazi was a struggle and remained a struggle throughout my time there. The situation remained uncertain and reports from some Libyans indicated it was getting worse. Diplomatic security remained weak. In April there was only one US diplomatic security agent stationed there. The RSO struggled to obtain additional personnel there but was never able to attain the numbers he felt comfortable with.

I hope the information I provide will be put together with 'data points' from others so an accurate picture can be obtained. We need to be dedicated to understanding the problems that surround this attack in order to find a solution. Our failure to do so will result in repeated instances that allow our adversaries an advantage over us. My purpose in conveying this information is to prevent their ability to take the life of another Ambassador or kill other valuable and talented public servants working in the diplomatic service of their country.